

BELFAST PUBLIC
LIBRARIES

BY BOG AND SEA IN DONEGAL

LIBRARIES NI
WITHDRAWN FROM STOCK

555 576 721
BY BOG AND SEA
IN DONEGAL

BY
ELIZABETH SHANE

Author of "Tales of the Donegal Coast
and Islands"



21
LONDON

SELWYN & BLOUNT, LTD.

21 YORK BUILDINGS, ADELPHI, W.C.2

V.E. J

25.6. 1924

Eason L/S-N

First Published in 1923

All Rights Reserved

*I sang my songs in a weary day
An' one that I knew came up the way ;
“ Now sure there's no sense at all,” said he,
“ In singin' o' things that have ceased to be.”
“ I know, God help me, I know,” said I,
“ But I sing for love o' the days gone by.”*

*An' far an' wide as I walked the land
'Twas sorrow an' fear on every hand,
For people were dead and songs were dumb,
An' clouds lay dark on the years to come.
But still as I went I sang away
To keep up heart for a better day.*



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

To
MY FATHER
AND
MOTHER



CONTENTS

	PAGE
DAWN IN DONEGAL	13
THE ISLANDERS	14
FRESH DULSE FOR THE FAIR	18
THE MOUNTAINY CHILDER	19
RED-HAIRED MEG	21
THE BOY FROM CARNTREENA	23
SHESKINBEG	25
THE OWLD MAN'S TALK	27
THE ANGELUS	30
THE CEILIDH	31
THE TRAVELLER	33
THE FIRST ONE	35
THE HILLS O' CLOGHANEELY	36
DARK DAYS	38
THE LITTLE ROAD	39
WEE HUGHIE	41
HERRIN'S IN THE BAY	42
THE PATROL BOAT	44
BIDDY MAGEE	45
THE WEE LOUGHS O' THE ROSSES	46
HUSH SONG	48
DANNY O'DOYLE	49
GREY STOCKIN'S	50
THE CRAB CATCHER	51

	PAGE
AT MAGHERACALLAN	52
THE HERONS ON BO ISLAND	54
SUNSET	55
THE WEE BOY IN BED	57
A SAD SONG	58
THE JIG	59
OFF THE ROSSES	61

ILLUSTRATIONS

Bog Road at Middletown	<i>Frontispiece</i>
On Inishmeane	<i>Facing page 18</i>
The Land of the mountainy Men	„ 20
The Hills o' Cloghaneely	„ 36
The Glory that is on them	„ 46
The Carrickataskin Bog	„ 48
Little Umfin with its hidden Bay	„ 54
On the west of Inishfree	„ 64



DAWN IN DONEGAL

GREY is the land in the lap of the dim night
sleeping,

Dark and still is the sea in the silent bay ;
Slow from beyond deep-bosomed hills comes
creeping

Timidly, step by step, a new-born day.

How can so wrapt a world arise from its dreaming ?

Can such a pale young dawn sweep night from
the sea ?

Or can so faint an air, such a soft light streaming,
Tell the drowsy earth of a day to be ?

A little flame is stirred from the sods that smoulder,

A child half-wakened comes to an open door,
And the new day looks up and laughs and is bolder,
Leaping from hill and bog to the silver shore.

Fair on the heights is the rosy flush of the heather,

Fragrant turf-scents mellow the morning air ;
Down in the bay like children playing together
Little waves are tossing their tangled hair.

Out of the west and shy as a girl to her mating,

Comes each mist-veiled island to meet the day ;
Far on the sea light winds, half hesitating,
Sweep the sun-touched garments of night away.

Down from the hills the unsleeping streams come,
singing

Tender, half-heard songs to the wakened plain ;
Over the sunlit sand-meads flowers are springing,
Weaving garlands to deck the day again.

THE ISLANDERS

THESE are the people I love, the folks of the
islands ;
Silent, clear-eyed men that are strong and rough-
handed,
Strong from the hauling of boats at beaching and
launching,
Hoisting the heavy sprit to the stiff rope becket,
Handling the oars or gripping the sheets in hard
weather,
Strong from the hauling of nets when there's luck
with the herrings,
Night and day sometimes they are out on the
water.
Plenty of work there is for them too at the home-
steads,
Digging the rock-strewn ground for the meagre
harvest—
Here the potatoes and there the corn for the
chickens—
Maybe a thatch to mend with grass from the
sandhills ;
Turf to be cut on the bog and spread for the
drying,
Then in due time to be carried and stacked for
the winter.
So they live in the wind and sun and are hardy,
Brown of face, strong-limbed, clean-hearted and
gentle,
Kind and true to their women, and ready with
laughter.
Plenty among them can sing or play on the fiddle—
Such are the men who live on the Donegal
islands.

What can I tell of their women, their mates and
their mothers ?
Tall and strong you will see them, fresh-faced
and ruddy,
Noble of mien, with eyes that in youth are glow-
ing
Tender and shy ; but in middle age that are
steady,
Radiantly calm with simple courage and patience ;
Bright in old age, as they see with their garnered
wisdom,
Deep, strange things unseen by eyes that are
younger.
Homely cares have the women—the food-pro-
viders—
Spreading the daily board and milking and churn-
ing,
Baking the fragrant farls on the hanging griddle.
Ready they are with help for the one that is
troubled,
Care for the sick, or a hearty word for the children,
And in their houses a guest is welcomed with
honour.
They too can work with their men, can shoulder
the turf-creel ;
Grey-haired women there are who can handle the
tiller,
Watching with eyes alert for the shoal or the sand-
bank,
Judging the currents and making the difficult
harbour,
When with red-kerchiefed heads they come to the
mainland,
In to the shop at Bunbeg for their tea or their
oatmeal,

Or it may be for the wonderful posting of
letters.

That is the place for talk, when they meet on the
quay-side :

Thus it will go—"An' who's for the fair on
Monday

Over in Derrybeg ?"—"There's Molly from
Gola,

She has a couple of calves she'll be selling a bar-
gain"—

And "Joe has sheep on the Foreland, he'll drive
them on Sunday"—

And "Owen, God help him, is sick and lying this
long time"—

So ring the busy tongues at the shop through the
archway,

Or on the old grey quay, where the boats are
huddled

Close in the quiet pool that is stirred where the
Clady

Empties its final torrent into the tide-way,

Mingling its song with the laughter and talk of the
people.

These are the folks that I love, the men and the
women

Living afar on the wind-swept, desolate islands.

Close on their eastward shores the houses are
clustered

Where from the pitiless storm there is promise of
shelter.

Ever the surf on the echoing cliffs is breaking—

Ever its ceaseless song in their ears is sounding—

Aye, and full well they know the tale of its changes ;

Anguish and fear it can bring to the hearts of the
women,

Struggle and toil to the men who are faring upon
it ;
Yet on each brow is the calm of wide spaces
reflected,
Clear in their eyes is the light of long distance
unbroken,
Fresh is their laughter as birds that unprisoned
are singing ;
And, as the flight of wild birds that are swift in
their homing,
So speed my thoughts to the far white homes of
the islands.

FRESH DULSE FOR THE FAIR

THERE's wet wrack streamin' on the sea
An' the rocks are brown an' bare ;
'Tis I will gather dulse to-day
An' dry it for the fair.

“ Oh sweet dulse for a penny,
Oh fresh dulse,” I will call ;
An' I will go to Derrybeg
To see the boys an' all.

The floatin' wrack was ill to reach,
The wee waves rose an' fell.
How will I go to Derrybeg
That has no dulse to sell ?

The rocks were sharp against my feet
An' nobody to heed,
Till Joe's wee boat came headin' in
Among the brown seaweed.

'Tis little talk he has at all
An' he's not that much to see,
But he rowed me through the heavy wrack
An' stripped the dulse for me.

'Twas him an' me that spread it out
Upon the rocks to dry,
An' I'll take dulse to Derrybeg
For all the lads to buy.

“ Oh sweet dulse for a penny,
Oh fresh dulse,” I will call.
But I've a lad in Inishmeane
Is better than them all.



On Inishmeane.



THE MOUNTAINY CHILDER

DOMENIC DARRAGH walked the land
Wi' a mountainy child at either hand ;
They were lean an' long an' big in the eyes
An' terrible hungry for their size.

" Now where did ye pick up *them* ? " said I,

" An' you wi' six o' ye're own forbye."

" 'Twas up at the wee red lough," said he,

" That I found the two—or they found me ;

They rose an' followed me down the track

An' sure I was feart to drive them back ;

They give no tongue an' they're quare to see,

An' I don't know what they *are*," said he.

" Would they eat," said I, " if I'd give them
bread ? "

An' Domenic laughed—" Is it eat ? " he said,

" They would eat the two of us, heels an'
head."

" It might be luck they would bring," said I.

" Och luck ! " said he, " there's a week gone by

Since I've been roamin' by hill an' glen

To see could I find the mountainy men

Would take them back to their own again ;

But never a one has crossed my way,

An' the childer follow me night an' day,

An' beyond the crack o' a laugh," said he,

" They haven't opened their lips to me.

My corn is ripe an' my turf's to store,

Yet I darena face to my own house door,

For who's to say but there'd ill befall

Wi' the like o' them in the house at all.

I'll be to travel the hills," said he,

" Till I lose the two—or they lose me—

An' och, dear knows when that will be."

I filled his pipe an' I gave him bread,
An' the good word deep in my heart I said
For the help o' one that walked in dread.
An' down the road they went, the three ;
While the crack o' a laugh came back to me.



The land o'the mountainy men.



RED-HAIRED MEG

A STRANGER man came in at the door—
Och ! but the wind blew loud an' strong—
“ Tell me,” sez he, “ am I welcome here
To a word o' cheer,
The fill o' a pipe an' a stave o' song ? ”

Then Norah brought him the fill o' a pipe,
An' Kate she piled the turf up higher,
An' Mary gave him a chair to sit
An' collogue a bit ;
But Meg sat still by the glowin' fire.

An' was it her eyes that danced an' shone,
Or was it the flame that flickered bright ?
An' why was her cheek like a sun-warmed rose ?
Sez he, “ Dear knows
What way my fortune will turn this night.”

An' Kate might dance an' Norah might sing,
'Twas still on Meg that his eyes would be ;
An' “ Only,” sez he, “ for the colour o' red
In the hair o' her head,
That's the one I would marry,” sez he.

Into the weeping night he went
With only himself for company ;
An' never a thought went after him,
For Meg, the limb !
Was married to Shan Milroy next day.

Then back he came when a year was past,
Wi' the dust o' travel upon his shoes ;

An' "Where," sez he, "is the one sat there
Wi' the shinin' hair?
The like o' her now is ill to lose."

'Twas little he found o' comfort then
For all that any o' them might say.
"I came a long road for nothin'," said he,
"'Tis a fool I'd be."
"She's married this long time now," said they.

THE BOY FROM CARNTREENA

I MET a girl upon the crown
Of owld Carntreena mountain ;
Said I, " I doubt ye've far to go,
Though where ye're from I do not know."
Said she, " 'Tis where the stream runs down
Between the rocks to Middletown,
The miles I'd not be countin'."

Said I, " An' what might be your name ? "
Said she, " They call me Mary."
The laughter shinin' from her eyes
Was like the dawn upon the skies.
Said I, " What road was it ye came ? "
Said she, " 'Tis hard to find the same."
An' flitted like a fairy.

'Twas I that crossed the heather brown
An' not that long behind her ;
I took the mountains to Cregmore,
I crossed the road that's from Gweedore,
An' saw the wee stream creepin' down
Between the rocks to Middletown,
Said I, " 'Tis here I'll find her."

A man wi' two-three cows was there
An' sure he thought me crazy ;
Said I, " I'm lookin' far an' near
For one the name o' Mary here,
An' maybe you'll can tell me where
I'd have the luck to meet wi' her ? "
Said he, " I could, an' aisy."

He took his pipe out an', said he,
" There's Mary up at Logans,
An' Mary Breen, an' Mary Boyle,

An' Mary Dunn, an' Mary Doyle,
An' Mary beg o' Barney Shea,
An' Mary Kate that's kin to me,
An' Mary o' the Brogans.

"An' still," he said, "there's plenty more
If that would be your fancy,
The most o' them is Mary here."
Said I, "Ye have me full o' fear,
I never heard the like before—
What one is that now, at the door?"
"Och that," said he, "is Nancy."

"She's kindly in her looks," said I,
"Her air is fine an' sprightly;
Wi' Mary's here o' every kind
The one I want I'd never find,
Nor wouldn't have the heart to try
The way I do be rayther shy;
'Tis Nancy'll do me rightly."

Now sure, the ways o' girls is queer
An' past a man's accountin'.
She tossed her head, "I doubt," said she,
"Ye never came to look for me;
There's them that knows what brought ye here
An' watched ye leppin' like a deer
Across Carntreena mountain."

I turned then to the road I came,
An' sure it was a long one.
For 'twas no use at all to stay
When Nancy wouldn't look my way,
An' I darena mention Mary's name
Wi' girls on every side the same,
For fear I'd get the wrong one.

SHESKINBEG

I MET the boy from Donegal, sez I, "Come here
a minute,
An' tell me how is Sheskinbeg, an' were ye ever
in it ?"
Sez he, "I know it well, but sure 'tis awkward
gettin' to it,
For there's not a road about the place but the
rocks is comin' through it."

Och well I know the road is rough, but still my
heart can love it,
Wi' the river runnin' at its side an' God's blue
sky above it ;
An' a wheen o' wee white houses sittin' there
among the heather,
Wi' childer runnin' in an' out an' playin' all
together.

If I could see the sun come up on Cloghaneely
highlands,
Or drop at night like fire in the sea behind the
islands ;
The glow o' red upon the hills, the deep shade
in the hollow,
The river slippin' through the bog an' callin' me
to follow ;

If I could win to Sheskinbeg an' see a turf fire
burnin',
An' hear the clack o' Andy's loom an' the champ
o' Mary's churnin',

An' see the griddle hangin' wi' potato farls upon
it,
There's not a road that rough but what my feet
could travel on it.

There's hearts as hard as rock itself, there's
sorrow can't be spoken,
I'd think a pity o' the man would say his heart
was broken;
But every road is rough to me that has no friend
to cheer it,
An' not a one will lead me now to Sheskinbeg, or
near it.

THE OWLD MAN'S TALK

CATHAL O'FLYNN lives all his lone
Wi' never a one to call his own ;
There's nobody knows the age he is,
Nor one in the place wi' a beard like his.
He'll sit an' dream on the bog all day,
Wi' his owld eyes starin' far away,
An' take no heed if it's wet or dry,
Nor see the one that would pass him by.
But still an' all, at the dusk o' night,
Himself in the house an' the lamp alight,
The people come by two an' three
An' chap at the door for company ;
An' it's " Come on in an' warm yer shins,"
An' " God save all," at Cathal O'Flynn's.
'Tis then he'll pile the turf to burn
While the wee dog smells at them all in turn ;
There's chairs for three an' a boss o' wool,
An' two can sit on the creepie stool ;
" An' sure," sez he, " if I do my best
There's only the floor to take the rest."
An' when they're settled about the room,
Half in the glow an' half in gloom,
'Tis then the talk an' the tales begin,
An' the best at the tellin' is Cathal O'Flynn.

He'll tell o' the days when himself was young,
An' sing wee staves o' the songs they sung—
An' none but himself would know them now—
He'll tell o' Andy McGinley's cow,
Drowned off the steep o' the Gola bight,
That still would walk on the land at night.
He'll tell o' travellin' here an' there
An' fifty miles to the hirin' fair,

An' barefoot there an' back again—
O' wee folk that himself saw plain
Behind Screglea twixt the dark an' dawn,
An' them in a ring round Peggeen bawn,
Owld Maura's child that they took away,
An' none heard tell o' her since that day.
He'll tell o' the church in his own townland
That never was built by mortal hand,
But every night it would grow a bit,
An' the whisper rose who was buildin' it ;
An' 'twould ha' been finished stone on stone
If them that was at it was left alone.
But once when the night was dark an' deep
Owld Kitty the broguey went to peep,
An' the dear knows what it might be befel,
But never a bit o' herself would tell—
“ Now God forgive me,” was all she'd say,
“ For drivin' the blessed saints away.”
An' speech was dead on her tongue since then,
An' the good saints never came back again,
An' the wee church never was roofed at all,
Though it's standin' yet wi' its broken wall.
An' maybe he'll tell how, long ago,
When a ship drove in on the rocks o' Bo,
He rode his mare across Dunmore strand,
An' sank to her ribs in the shiftin' sand ;
“ An' sure, if it had-a-been death for me
I had no sin on me then,” sez he.
He'll whisper too as the light burns dim,
The wild-like things that have chanced to him
Beyond in the south by hill an' glen,
When he'd cross the land o' the mountainy
men.
The wee, dark lough on the mountain side
That none will name or there'd ill betide,

For never a one but knows full well
That deep in its waters the big hounds dwell.
An' sure there'd be fear for miles about
If the whisper'd come that themselves were out ;
The doors would be shut both far an' wide
An' God help him would be left outside.
An' once himself wi' a harvest load
Saw the wet trail o' them on the road,
An' lay in the bog as the dead might lie,
An' heard the rush o' them passin' by ;
An' sure when he rose in the mornin' light
The hair on his head was shinin' white.

An' that's the talk o' him, tale on tale,
Till them that listen are feart an' pale,
An' none would venture the dark alone,
For fear o' meetin' wi' things unknown.
An' sure as he sits there, bent an' thin,
His long white beard on his mumblin' chin,
There's some has pity they couldn't own
For lavin' the owld man there his lone,
Wi' the wild wind cryin' about the shore.
But still there's whiles, as they lave the door
They'll fancy they hear—but och, dear knows—
The breath o' a laugh as the last one goes.

THE ANGELUS

MARY and Manus are working the turf together—
Old they are the two of them, old and grey ;
Over the bog the sea-wind sings in the heather,
Night clouds lie on the hill-tops far away.

They will have comfort now when the nights are
colder,
They will have turf, aye, plenty of turf to spare ;
Light she steps with the heavy creel on her
shoulder,
Load on load for the stack he is building there.

There is a deeper note than the sea-wind's singing,
Clear it comes on the breath of the dying day ;
Down in the hollow the bell from the chapel is
ringing,
And Mary and Manus stand for a minute and
pray.

Soft and low on the air each long note lingers,
Humbly bending their old grey heads they
stand,
Making the holy sign with work-worn fingers,
Wrapped in the sudden peace that has blessed
the land.

Is it the light of Heaven on the wide sea breaking,
Giving its glory out like a golden rain ?
Aye, and with God's own light in their eyes
awaking,
Mary and Manus are working the turf again.

THE CEILIDH ¹

THE red glow on the water,
The soft wind on the shore,
An' him an' me to sail across
To the ceilidh at Gweedore—
Och, the weary hours since yesterday
Are like a year an' more.

Now sure he was my own love,
The boy from Mullaghdoo ;
Sez he, " 'There'll be no other one
Will dance as neat as you."
An' how could I be tellin' him
My heart was dancin' too ?

Owld Tholom played the fiddle
An' them that liked could sing,
Ye never seen as fine a jig
As what my lad could spring,
An' whiles there'd be the whole of us
Together in a ring.

An' what should ail my own love
That such a thing could be,
He'd take a stranger by the hand
For all o' them to see ;
An' dance a dozen times wi' her
For once he'd dance wi' me ?

An' if her eyes were shinin',
An' if her face was fair,

¹ Ceilidh : A gathering of people ; an evening party. Pron. Kaylee.

An' if her gown was silk itself,
 'Tis little I would care ;
But the light upon` my lad's face
 Was what I could not bear.

Oh late, late to the island
 Wi' its golden starry crown,
We sailed the silver water
 Wi' the white moon shinin' down,
An' cold an' quiet lay the night
 Upon the wee white town.

The weary waves came creepin'
 White-edged into the bay,
An' the pale face o' my own lad
 Was near as white as they,
An', sez he, " God help the two of us,"
 An' turned himself away.

I watched him up the loanin'
 An' my heart was cryin' out ;
There's not a man in all the world
 I'll marry now, I doubt,
When my own one couldn't like me well
 Wi' other girls about.

The dark o' night's for sorrow
 That ne'er a one may see,
But I'll be to rise in the dreary dawn
 An' the day for work must be,
Though the love-light in my lad's eyes
 Will shine no more for me.

THE TRAVELLER

Now who's to know the trouble's in a promise that
is broken ?

An' who's to say but clouds will gather on a
summer's day ?

Och, what was in a girl's laugh or in a rough word
spoken,

That all the world between us was not far
enough away ?

The years that I have wandered now are many for
the countin',

Yet, young or old, I never saw the place I'd care
to be,

Nor a wee town like Crolla at the foot o' Crogan
Mountain,

Where the rivers meet each other an' go laughin'
to the sea.

Och, sure now I was foolish when I left it heavy-
hearted ;

But I would seek for money in the world both
up an' down ;

An' if I have no more, an' maybe less, than when
I started

I would not lave the Rosses now to win a golden
crown.

'Tis well enough to thravel an' to see them far-off
places

Though not a one's like Ireland when all is done
an' told ;

But sure a man is better that can look on friendly
faces,
An' feel his own land under him when he'd be
growin' old.

I never felt in all the world as sweet a breeze
ablowin'
As lifted up the wathers o' the Foyle to flecks c'
foam ;
I never saw the land could look as fair as Inishowen,
All gleamin' in the mornin' mist the day that I
came home.

Och, sure my heart was leapin' at the glory o' the
heather
Where my wee town was sittin' in a skelter o'
soft rain ;
There's magic in the scent of it, an' in the changin'
weather,
An' not a bit o' me will go from Ireland again.

THE FIRST ONE

“MY !” sez he, “but he’s fine an’ long !
Howld him up till I see the len’th o’ him ;
Look at the legs o’ him, stout an’ strong—
Where is his fist till I feel the stren’th o’ him ? ”
“ *Whisht man, whisht,*” sez she, *wi a sootherin’
song.*

“Watch,” sez he, “an’ his eyes’ll peep ;
Och, but ye’d laugh to see the blue o’ them.
Look at his hair, like a wee black sheep,
Curls enough on his head for two o’ them.”
“ *Whisht man, whisht,*” sez she, “*an’ the
child asleep.*”

“He’ll come fishin’ the bay wi’ me,
He’ll catch more than ever was known in it ;
Maybe I’ll build a wee boat,” sez he,
“Just *that* long, an’ he’ll sail his lone in it.”
“ *Whisht man, whisht,*” sez she, “*sure he’s
far too wee.*”

“He’ll be the one wi’ a laugh in his eye,
Look at his mouth, ye’d know there’d be tunes
in it ;
He’ll be the one for the girls by an’ bye,
Sure there’ll be none o’ the other gossoons in it.”
“ *Whisht man, whisht,*” sez she, *wi’ a soft
wee sigh.*

“Where will he thravel when he’ll be grown ? ”
“Whisht,” sez she, “till I hap the shawl on him ;
Man, ye’re talkin’ o’ things unknown,
Turn the light for fear it ’ud fall on him—
Sh-h-h ! God help him,” sez she, “*sure he’s
just my own.*”

THE HILLS O' CLOGHANEELY

O ! THE hills o' Cloghaneely, ye may roam them
up an' down,
When the bracken is a blaze o' gold an' the heather
turnin' brown ;
'Tis there ye'll find a wheen o' things that are but
little known,
For the hills o' Cloghaneely, they have secrets o'
their own.

If ye'd climb up to the height o' them ye'd see the
world an' all,
Wi' lough an' river gleamin' grey, an' the houses
far an' small ;
An' ships away by Tory goin' westward wi' the
sun,
An' a glint o' foam an' a trail o' smoke behind them
every one.

There's a dip behind Crokeeragh ye could lie a
summer day
An' never see a livin' soul come up across your way,
Nor hear the smallest sound at all o' any livin'
thing,
But the bees about the heather or a bird upon the
wing.

An' away in at the heart o' them where scarce a
one would go,
There are little happy places where the ferns and
ivy grow,



The Hills o'Cloghaneely.

Wee nooks o' green an' tender moss where fairies
be to dwell

Though how they come or how they go there's
sorra one can tell.

Sure I thought I heard them talkin' as the day
died in the west,

Till I found a baby river whimperin' at the brown
earth's breast ;

An' I thought I saw them dancin' when the stars
came out above,

Till I found a bloom o' white upon the heather
for my love.

O ! the hills o' Cloghaneely, ye may roam them
up an' down,

An' never see the rings o' moss among the heather
brown.

An' if folk in Stranabrooey whiles have stories they
can tell,

Yet the hills o' Cloghaneely, they can keep their
secrets well.

DARK DAYS

BLACK is the world now 'wi' trouble an' care,
Dark days o' sorrow have fallen on me ;
All o' my heart is wi' Kitty out there,
Where she would travel across the wild sea.

Why would she go an' me biddin' her stay ?
Aye, from my heart were the words that I said ;
" Sure if ye will ye can follow," she'd say,
Dancin' an' laughin' an' tossin' her head.

Drear was the day that I sailed her to land
In at Bunbeg wi' its close-hidden quay ;
Me wi' the ropes feelin' strange in my hand
Wild wi' the pain o' her goin' from me.

Plenty there were that could bid her good-bye,
Aye, an' could follow the road she had gone,
Laughin' an' callin' an' wavin' ; but I
Back to the island came sailin' alone.

Here is my home since the day I was born,
Sorra a son has my mother but me ;
Who would be mindin' the cows an' the corn
If I would follow across the salt sea ?

That is the way I am full o' despair,
Youth now is dead in me, owld I have grown ;
What if my heart is with Kitty out there,
How can I lave my owld mother alone ?

THE LITTLE ROAD

A LITTLE road enticed me and I went,
Wondering perhaps, that any road should go
To such wild country as the hills that lay
Before me in the way ;
And curious to know
Unto what hidden things my steps were bent.

And ever up and upward as it wound
Between the rocks that lay on either side,
Wilder and yet more wild it seemed to me.
No man was there to see,
No bird was there that cried,
Nor, save my echoing footsteps, any sound.

So into wider country washed with rain
With billowing heather spread for mile on mile,
But never house or reason for a road ;
A little river flowed
Beside me for a while
And with light laughter disappeared again.

A dark lake, hill-encircled, filled with sedge
Lay at my feet ; I passed it swiftly by,
Craving some living thing to comfort me,
But nothing could I see
Save the wild hills and sky
And water lapping at the white road's edge.

Through mists I strode, yet half against my will,
The lure of winding ways persuading me ;
Till suddenly at last before me stood

A dwelling small and rude
And pitiful to see,
And at its door the little road stood still

And went no further. Silence lay profound
Upon the world ; footpaths led here and there
About the hills with aimless wandering,
But still no living thing
Could I see anywhere,
Nor aught but rocks and heather all around.

A breath of smoke wavered above the thatch,
And my heart leaped for love of company,
And hope of human voices that would bless
This too great loneliness
With friendly words to me—
So I came eagerly and raised the latch.

A fire of turf and bogwood old and gnarled
Burned on the open hearth ; some skins of sheep
Hung from the ceiling ; milk stood in a pan ;
A lean and ancient man
Lay on the bed asleep,
And under it a sleeping dog that snarled.

And that was all. O road, that by so steep
And strange a way gained solitude so vast,
Why did you tempt me, climbing thus with pain
Through mountain mist and rain
To find this at the last—
A house, and man, and dog—and all asleep ?

WEE HUGHIE

He's gone to school, wee Hughie,
An' him not four,
Sure I saw the fright was in him
When he left the door.

But he took a hand o' Denny,
An' a hand o' Dan,
Wi' Joe's owld coat upon him—
Och, the poor wee man !

He cut the quarest figure,
More stout nor thin ;
An' trottin' right an' steady
Wi' his toes turned in.

I watched him to the corner
O' the big turf stack,
An' the more his feet went forrit,
Still his head turned back.

He was lookin', would I call him—
Och, my heart was woe—
Sure it's lost I am without him,
But he be to go.

I followed to the turnin'
When they passed it by,
God help him, he was cryin',
An', maybe, so was I.

HERRIN'S IN THE BAY

HERRIN's in the west 'bay, an' all the world
a-fishin'

Boats up from Aran an' from round the Fore-
land too ;

Sure I can sail a boat, but what's the use o'
wishin' ?

When a girl is married she has other things
to do.

Deep blue wathers an' the shinin' autumn
weather ;

Brown sails crowdin' till the sea is like a fair ;
For when the herrin's in 'tis all o' them together,
An' the first to Kincasslagh wi' a load has luck
to spare.

Light winds liftin' the spray like feathers flyin',
Sails in the sun glowin' red about the bay ;
Far on the wather I hear the seagulls cryin'—
Me that is married has to mind the house all
day.

Strong is the flood tide sweepin' by Doonrower,
Fillin' the bay where the stones are laid for
wrack ;

Dark in the south there is owld Kincasslagh
tower,

An' from its shadow the boats are comin' back.

" *How did ye fare lad ?* " " Och, 'tis aisy tellin'."

" *Had ye a load then ?* " " As fine as ye
would see.

What is a load when there's no luck at the sellin' ?
Sure 'tis a day's work that's only lost on me."

" Och now, an' och now, what is it ye're ailin' ?
Me that is married now, if I could have my way,
When once't the herrin's in I would still be
sailin',
Good luck or ill, wi' the fishers in the bay."

THE PATROL BOAT

SHE was out in the broad o' the bay,
A quare wee cut o' a steamer rovin' about
Here an' there through the islands, in an' out,
Back an' forrit—sez I, “Has she lost her way,
That she nayther knows where to go nor where
to stay?”

So I sat on a lump o' rock an' watched her, half
o' the day—

An' troth now she puzzled me.

Sez I to Joe, that was dryin' his nets at the wall,
“I can't make out,” sez I, “what she's doin' at
all.”

“'Tis what they call path-rollin' she is,” sez he—

“'Tis the war that is in it has them quare craft
in the sea.”

So we sat an' watched her the rest o' the day, just
him an' me.

BIDDY MAGEE

“ THERE’S plenty o’ people as well as me
Has achin’ bones,” says Biddy Magee ;

“ But och,” says she,

“ There’s nobody only yerself can know
The pain that’s in ye from head to toe
Because it’s yerself that has it,” says she.

“ I’ve hens to feed an’ I’ve corn to raise
An’ I couldn’t let on nor take my aise,
But och,” she says,

“ ’Tis in in the house at night my lone
I be to sit at the fire an’ groan,
An’ them outside knows nothin’,” she says.

“ There’s plenty suffers as well as me,
An’ the pain o’ another is ill to see,
Because,” says she,

“ There’s never a mortal one can tell
What each one tholes in the house hissel’ ;
’Tis the way o’ the world,” says Biddy Magee.

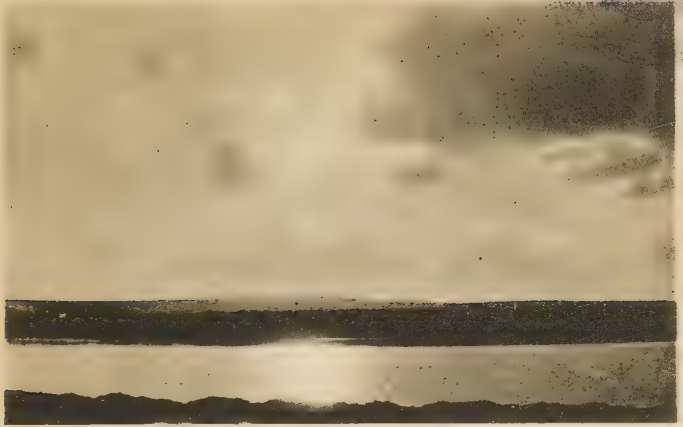
THE WEE LOUGHS O' THE ROSSES

THERE'S a wind across the mountains blowin'
westward to the sea,
An' the wee loughs in the heather they are
singin' drearily ;
Och, who's to tell the song o' them, an' what
should be amiss ?
Sure the land is mostly water in the Rosses, so
it is.

'Tis up on Cronaigiggy ye would see for miles
around *
The wee loughs o' the Rosses lyin' low upon the
ground,
Wi' the water dancin' at the dawn an' leapin' to
the light,
Or white, like silver, on the land below the moon
at night.

There's whiles they'd be to frighten ye, they look
that dark an' deep,
An' whiles they lie as quiet as a child, an' it
asleep ;
An' sure 'tis I have seen them when I'd be to
turn away
For the glory that is on them at the closin' o' the
day.

Och, the wee loughs o' the Rosses, sure I know
them every one,
An' I love them lyin' clear an' still before the
settin' sun,



The glory that is on them.



Wi' rings upon the water where the feedin' fish'll
rise ;
But the east wind, oh the east wind, there is
trouble when it cries.

There's a wind upon the mountains sweepin'
westward o'er the land,
An' the tale o' sadness in it sure there's few can
understand ;
But there's sorrows long forgotten rise an' come
again to me
When the waters o' the Rosses do be singin' to
the sea.

HUSH SONG

Och, hush ye then, och hush ye—
There's herrin's in the bay,
An' you'll be the wee fisherman
Some day—some day.

Och, rest ye then, och rest ye—
The herrin's do be small,
An' you're the boy when you'll be big
Will catch them all.

Och, hush ye then, och hush ye—
The night is dark an' wet,
An' you too wee, och heart o' mine,
For fishin' yet.

Och, hush ye then, och hush ye—
'Tis cowl'd upon the sea,
But this wee house is warm itself
For you an' me.

Och, sleep ye now, och sleep ye—
For sure a night will come
When you'll be wakin' on the sea,
An' me at home.



The Carrickataskin Bog.



DANNY O'DOYLE

'Tis Danny O'Doyle is the cure !

I met him beyond on the Carrickataskin bog,
Sittin' close to the roadside, him an' his dog,
The one as owld as the other, bent an' grey—
Said I, " What brings ye here at this time o' day ? "
He sucked his pipe an' laughed his owld laugh at
me ;

Said he, " I'm lookin' for what I might chance to
see."

Said I, " 'Tis little ye'll see up here at all,
If it's sights ye're wantin'," said I, " sure ye're
luck is small,

Ye'd see more stir on the road at Middletown."
His sharp owld eyes were wanderin' up an' down—
Sure I was wishin' him far enough, before
My lad would come that had trysted me from
Dore.

Then Danny rose. Said he, " Well, ye're maybe
right ;

I'll away an' see what fun's in the town to-night."
And then wi' a laugh he hobbled across to me,
"*He's hidin' behind the stack, I seen him,*" said he.
Och, Danny O'Doyle is the cure !

GREY STOCKIN'S

ON Sunday all the girls
That live in Middletown
Have shoes upon their feet,
An' stockin's grey an' brown ;
But I go barefoot up the road an' down.

On Sunday from the Church
The girls come two an' three,
An' each one has a lad
To keep her company ;
But there is no lad ever walks wi' me.

Now sure if I had money
That always do have nōne,
'Tis I would have grey stockin's
An' fine shoes o' my own,
An' maybe then I mightn't walk my lone.

THE CRAB CATCHER

Down by the sea at the slack o' the tide
When the seaweedy rocks are bare,
Owld Kitty goes huntin' the holes for crabs,
An' sure there are plenty there.
She hokes them out wi' her naked hands—
It wouldn't be I would dare.

"Ha'e ye luck," sez I, "wi the crabs to-day?"
"Och, middlin' luck," sez she.
An' I laughed to mysel' for 'twas I knew well
She wouldn't let on to me.
But sure I could see that her gathered skirt
Was as full as it well could be.

As I went home by the risin' tide
Owld Kitty came up the bay;
As light as a girl on her two bare feet,
For all that her hair is grey.
And she stooped an' made a hole in the sand
Just where I would cross her way.

"Good-night," said I, but she gave no word,
And girmed as she passed my side.
"Ye cross owld witch," said I to mysel'—
And that was the minute I spied,
At my feet, the crabs she had left for me
In the sand, wi' their nippers tied.

AT MAGHERAGALLAN

THEY have waited all the mornin' for the fallin'
o' the tide,
An' they're comin' down the loanin' to the
shallow water's side.
Och, 'tis sad an' slow they're comin' wi' a weary,
weary load,
An' the childer stand to watch them at the
turnin' o' the road.

There's a gleam o' silver water where they be to
cross the bay,
An' the sand is wet an' shiny where the tide has
slipped away.
They are goin' to the sandhills where the grave-
yard lies alone,
An' 'tis Rosaleen they're takin' there, that was
to be my own.

Well I mind the day I met her, standin' tall
among the wheat,
Wi' a red shawl tied about her hair, an' poppies
at her feet,
Her eyes were like the darkness o' an east wind on
the sea,
But her laughter was like sunshine as she came
across to me.

'Twas the wee crop in the hollow she was reapin'
up an' down,
An' the wind had loosed a curl o' hair an' tossed
her yellow gown.

As she stood so fair before me it was little I could
say,
But the thought o' her is in my heart for ever
from that day.

Och, 'tis heavy, heavy hearted they are comin' one
by one,
Men an' women, through the shallows that lie
gleamin' in the sun ;
An' 'tis I have come to meet her where we two
would often meet,
An' my tears are like the water that is streamin'
round their feet.

Low in little Gallan graveyard wi' its broken
walls o' stone,
An' the sea that breaks beside it makin' thunder
o' its own ;
It is there they be to leave her that was young
an' fair to see,
An' it's never in the world at all will comfort
come to me.

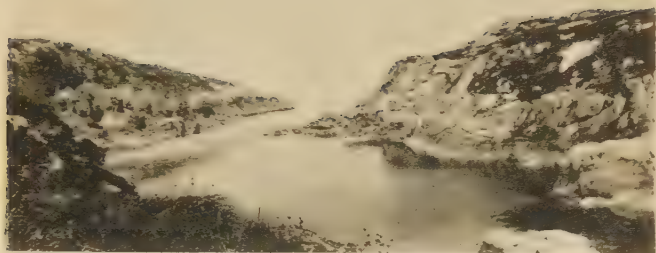
THE HERONS ON BO ISLAND

THE herons on Bo Island
Stand solemnly all day ;
Like lean old men together
They hump their shoulders grey.
Oh, I wish I could get near them
To hear the things they say.

They turn up their coat collars
And stand so gloomily ;
And somehow, as I watch them,
It always seems to me
That in their trouser pockets
Their wrinkled hands must be.

But if I venture near them
They look at me in doubt,
And with great wings loose-flapping
They circle round about,
Their long legs hanging downwards,
Their slim necks all stretched out.

If I stood on Bo Island
As gloomily as they,
And ruffled up my collar
And hid my hands away,
It might be they would join me
And I'd hear the things they say.



Little Umfin with its hidden bay.

SUNSET

BECAUSE I am a dweller in the town
Why should my heart be prisoned in its walls,
Nor heed the silent calls
Of far-off places ? When the sun went down
To-night with unaccustomed red and gold,
Lighting the faces of the west-bound crowd,
I could have cried aloud ;
And almost, for my frenzy made me bold,
Had laid my hands upon one passing by
And stopped him in the way, to bid him stare
Because no town was there,
But a lone coast, and islands, and wide sky.
He would have thought " A madman "—laughed
at me—

Yet out beyond the bricks and bustling folk
And reddened veil of smoke
My heart could see the sun dip to the sea
In undreamed glory, and before my eyes
Lay all the beauty of my own homeland—
Long curving bays of sand
Upon whose laps the white-fringed ocean lies,
And little islands, low upon the breast
Of opaline waters. Golden Carrickfin
Its wide strands burning in
The deepening glow ; dim Owey in the west ;
And the long line of Aran far away ;
And Gola with its two brown hills that lie
Darkling against the sky ;
And little Umfin with its hidden bay—
Oh, well I know the silence of those shores,
So vast a silence—broken suddenly
By voices from the sea,
A jarring tiller or the dip of oars ;

The dropping of a sail ; a grinding strain,
The grating of a boat upon the sand ;
Footsteps somewhere at hand
That pass and fade ; then silence once again.
Oh, sweet and still the night, deep shadows fall ;
There is a whispering of the tide that fills ;
Far in the fading hills
Gleams out the lone grey peak of Errigal.
Slowly the wonders of the day take wing,
The golden splendour wanes reluctantly,
And dark upon the sea
A little new-born breeze comes shivering.
So pales my vision ; and a sudden crowd
Moves all about me ; the sweet silence dies
And half-heard sounds arise
That grow and gather, talk that is too loud,
Too shrill and loud for my heart's wanderings—
“London,” says one, “is good enough for me”—
And suddenly I see
Houses and men and carriages and things.

THE WEE BOY IN BED

I MIND my granny wi' her wrinkled hands
 Cardin' the wool ;

I mind my mother at her spinnin' wheel,
 On a low stool.

I mind myself a wee, wee boy in bed,
 Lyin' so still ;

I mind the quare wee lamp that glimmered
 On the window sill.

I mind my father climbin' to the loft
 To work the loom ;

I mind the clackin' noise that it would make
 Down in the room.

An' well I mind the way I'd be afeart
 O' what 'twould be,

An' then herself would lave the wheel an' come
 Whisperin' to me—

“ Och, whisht ye ara-a-thaisce,¹ turn your face
 In to the wall,

There's not a hait o' harm in the owld loom
 At all, at all.”

I mind the way her voice would murmur on
 Close to my ear ;

I mind the way I'd hear the crickets singin'
 Loud an' clear.

An' still I mind the light would flicker dim,
 The turf burn red,

But I can never mind the big ones then
 Goin' to bed.

¹ A term of endearment, “ Well then, O treasure,” pronounced, arra hashkee.

A SAD SONG

OCH, 'tis weary, weary on the day
That brought me over here,
Where the heavy hours go slowly by
An' every day's a year.
'Tis from dawn to dark I'm thinkin' long
For the one that is dear to me,
An' her away in Annagrey—
Ochanee, anee, anee.

All the land is ripe wi' yellow corn
That the wind sweeps up an' down,
An' there's gold to get, an' lose again,
In every little town.
But if I owned the world itself,
Across from sea to sea,
I'd give it all for Donegal—
Ochanee, anee, anee.

THE JIG

GIRLEENS o' Gortahork give me a chance wi' ye,
Sure I'm the fellow that's nimble to dance wi' ye,
None o' yer laughin' an' lookin' askance wi' ye,
I'm the fine dancer now, wait till ye see.

Fun boys ! Och, sure ye know it is,
Come girls ! Heel now an' toe it is,
Out wi' yer elbows an' curtseyin' low it is,
Step in the middle an' foot it wi' me.

Molly's the one that has two pretty feet on her,
She has a gown that is slender an' neat on her,
Och, the wee shawl on her head now is sweet on
her,

Look at the laugh in the tail o' her eye.
Sharp, sharp, heels to the ground again !
Light, light, here we go round again,
There she is lost now an' here she is found again,
Fun in her glances for all she is shy.

Look at the way she can trip when I'm chasin'
her,

Never a lad has the chance of out-pacin' her,
Sure if I did now I might be embracin' her,
Stealin' the rose that is stuck in her gown.
Here now ! pointin' her toes at me,
Och ! Och ! watch how she goes at me ;
Over her shoulder the look that she throws at me
Sure it would make a young fellow break down.

How can I dance wi' my heart so onaisy now ?
Though the soft turn o' her cheek has me crazy
now,

Still she's as neat an' as cool as a daisy now—
Wait till I whisper the word in her ear.
Ab! Ab! that is the way wi' them!
Come boys, dance while ye may wi' them!
Sure if ye're bowld there is never a nay wi' them,
Molly'll be mine at the heel o' the year.

OFF THE ROSSES

A SOLDIER's wind in the fairway from the bay to
the open sea,
And a boat in at Skull Island that waits for my
mate and me ;
She is twenty feet from bow to stern and her
masts are short and strong,
And with brown sprit-sails on her fore and main,
'tis she can roll along ;
With her halyards fast on the weather gun'le, and
right good stays are they,
And a bit of a jib to keep her up against she'd
make leeway.
O, that is the rig that I would have whenever I
go to sea,
For that is the rig of the Rosses man, and it's
good enough for me.

Out through the jabble
'Twixt Doonrower and Skull ;
Short waves from the cross-tides
Slapping her hull.

Out through the channel
Where the water is deep,
Gliding by banks
Where the broken waves leap ;

O, where they laugh and leap,
Tossing their spray,
Close on our weather beam,
A yard away.

Green Inishinny
Is waving with grass ;
Grey herons watch us
And stir as we pass.

And it's steady now for the sudden lurch of the
waves upon the bar,
And it's up and over them one by one with
creaking block and spar,
Till we're clear of them in the open, where the
sea is shining grey,
And the breeze is blowing straight and true with
nothing to break its way.

We head her north by Umfin and the big rock of
Torbane,
And we're through the line of the islands, out
west of Inishmeane,
Where the waves come up like mountains with
a long unbroken roll,
And the joy of the wide Atlantic makes a play-
thing of your soul.

O, the boat is stout and steady, and it's what she
would need to be ;
Her masts are low and her sails are small as she
meets each towering sea ;
She is like a bird on the white-flecked slope and
she takes its joyous lift,
With an easy swing and never a jar to make her
ballast shift.

We stay her by Rinogy where the breakers dash
and slide,

And it's now for speed with the breeze behind
and a boom on either side ;
And a steady hand on the tiller as she yaws in
the racing sea,
And all hands aft for ballast till we're under the
islands' lee.

Then out with the lines and tackle as we make for
the fishing ground ;
And down with the fores'l to check her speed as
we haul and head her round
To the bight at the south of Gola where the
Mweelmore cliffs stand sheer ;
If there's mackerel in the sea at all we'll surely
find them here.

All up and down that sheltered mile we have
fished full many a day,
With Go and Allagh to the south like jewels in
the bay ;
And Torglass, a grey sentinel that keeps the
ocean's door,
The sternest bit of rock that ever stood on a
stormy shore.

O, the jerk and pull of the laden line are things
that are good to feel,
And the flash and gleam of the fish as they come
are like leaping blades of steel ;
And the shimmering heap in the boat grows big
as the day goes swiftly by,
And the wind works round to the west as the sun
is westering in the sky.

Out now from the quiet water where the wheeling
 sea birds call,
And there's time for a reach to the south'ard
 before the night shall fall ;
So we haul a bit to clear the swell on the west of
 Inishfree,
And then it's a race in a romping breeze to the
 point of Rinnalea.

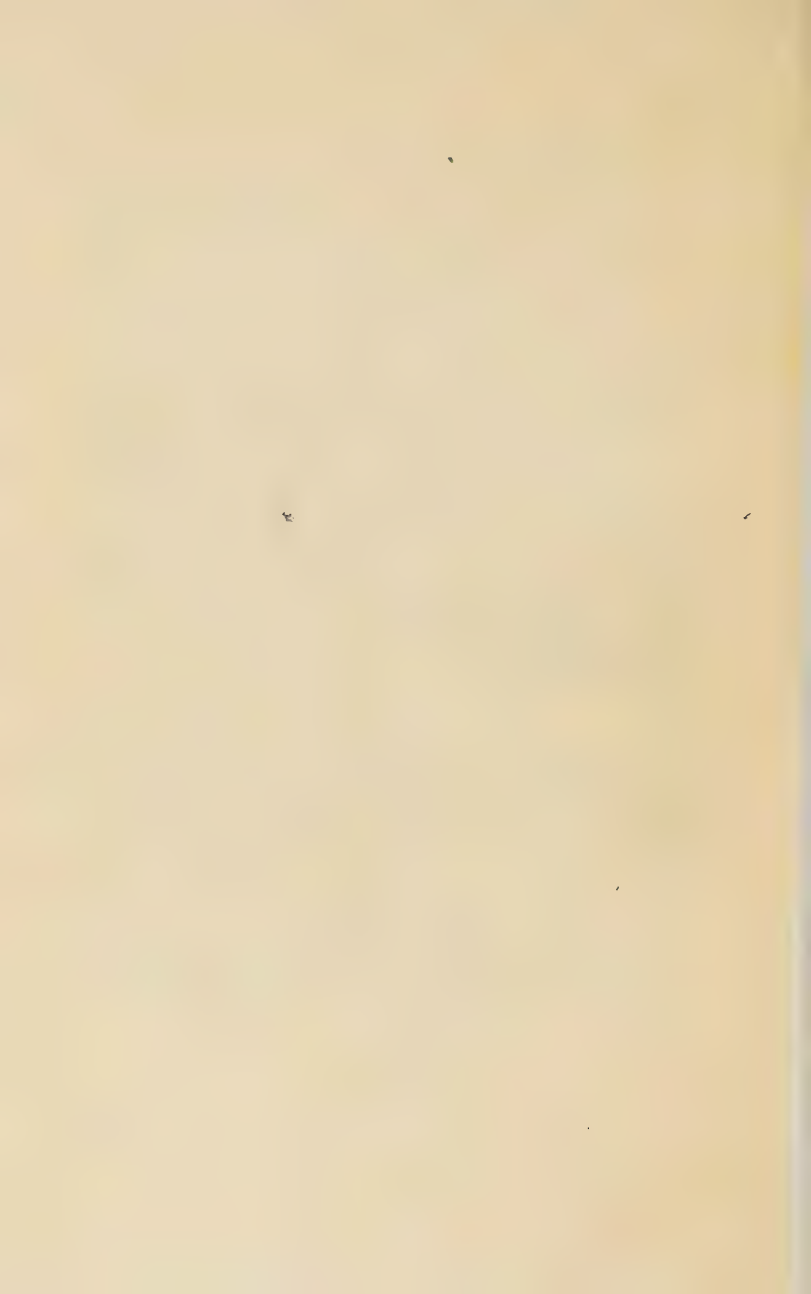
The sun is low when we fetch Dunmore, and the
 breeze falls to an air
As we cross the sandy shallows with all of a foot
 to spare ;
We jibe her there in the channel that is red with
 the western glow,
And slip along, for the rising tide is under us as
 we go.

'Tis sweet in the quiet evening, and the moveless
 waters gleam
As we drift to look for a landing by the edge of a
 turf-stained stream.
O, peace comes like a crown at last to him who
 has sought no ease,
And no man loves a haven like the man who has
 loved the seas.





On the West of Inishfree.







KR-206-204

